

WAR! What Is It All About?



HAS the whole world gone stark mad over a very foolish and trivial question? Are swords rattling, cannon rumbling, mailed armour clashing just because Russia wanted to show her love for the little brother—Serbia?

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INJURY TO POTATOES

Result of Interesting Experiment at New York Station.

To insure Efficient Disinfection It is Necessary to Have Comparatively High Humidity—Sprouted Condition a Factor.

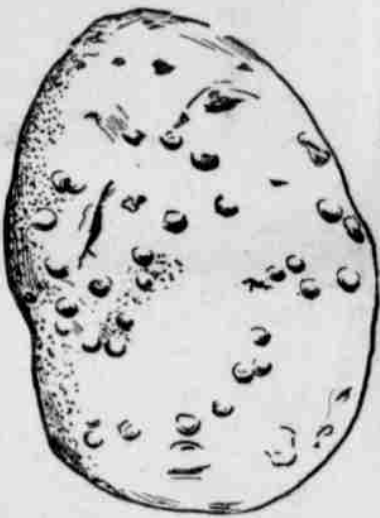
(By F. C. STEWART.)

In treating a quantity of seed potatoes with formaldehyde gas for scab at the New York experiment station, many of them were so severely injured that they were unfit for seed. The injury took the form of sunken brown spots surrounding the lentils and eyes. The gas was generated by the permanganate method, using the standard formula of three pints of formaldehyde solution and 23 ounces of potassium permanganate to each 1,000 cubic feet of space. An investigation into the cause of the injury placed the blame chiefly upon the small quantity (1.5 pounds) of potatoes per cubic foot of space in the fumigation chamber. The high relative humidity of the air and the sprouted condition of the potatoes were important accessories.

Numerous investigations have shown that in order to insure efficient disinfection it is necessary to have a comparatively high humidity.

In disinfecting seed potatoes Professor Morse recommends that "just before placing the formaldehyde in the generator the floor of the disinfecting chamber should be thoroughly wet down with boiling water." In cellars and storerooms suitable for seed potatoes the humidity is naturally high. The sprouted condition of the potato is also a factor in the humidity. By the property of absorption the potatoes seize and hold the formaldehyde gas upon their surface. If there are few potatoes they absorb so much gas that the tissue is injured; but when the gas is distributed over a large quantity of potatoes it does not gather at any point in sufficient quantity to cause injury.

In our experiments various degrees of lenticel spotting occurred with all quantities up to 12 pounds per cubic foot, but no injury appeared when five pounds or more per cubic foot were



Potato Injured by Fumigation With Formaldehyde Gas.

used. The gas treatment is to be recommended only in cases in which the liquid treatment is impracticable. With the gas treatment it is evident that in order to secure uniform results the quantity of the chemicals must be varied according to the quantity of potatoes per cubic foot of space. At present, the only formula which can be recommended as being both safe and efficient for scab is that of three pints of formaldehyde and 23 ounces of permanganate to 167 bushels of potatoes in 1,000 cubic feet of space.

Similar spotting of potatoes results from exposure to the fumes of ammonia, bromine or ether, and from dipping or soaking in strong solutions of corrosive sublimate and formaldehyde. However, in the use of formaldehyde solution the quantity of potatoes treated has no appreciable influence on the degree of the injury. The same solution may be used at least ten times without loss of strength.

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